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ABSTRACT

An evaluation and comparison of college and university intensive English programs in the United States focuses on program structure, organization, curriculum, faculty, program strengths, and areas for development. The evaluation instrument was a five-page questionnaire returned by directors of 41 of the 51 qualifying programs. It was determined that the typical program conforms to standard session lengths, meets five days a week, and has 14-17 students. Most of the programs charge upwards of \$1,400 per session. Many offer multiple levels of instruction and basic skills are offered in all, while special skills such as study skills, test preparation, accent reduction, and survival English appear in almost half. English for special purposes is available in half the programs, and credit is offered in almost half. Most directors named faculty and curriculum as major program strengths, followed by reputation and administrative quality. The areas of weakness cited were research and materials development, the language laboratory, and student recruitment, followed by faculty working conditions. The administrative structure varies widely, with one third of the programs belonging to divisions of continuing education, while others are part of modern language, linguistics, arts and sciences, humanities, developmental studies, and other departments. Administrative positions also vary greatly, and slightly more than half of the faculty were found to be working with full-time contracts. Appended tables provide statistical data from the responses. (MSE)

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A CROSS PROGRAM EVALUATION OF MAJOR INTENSIVE ENGLISH PROGRAMS

By Christine Uber Grosse and Dawna Lubell

INTRODUCTION

The cross program evaluation described in this study compares certain aspects of major Intensive English Programs (IEPs) in the United States. The study focuses on program structure, organization, curriculum, faculty, program strengths, and areas for development. The evaluation instrument was a five-page questionnaire mailed to the directors of fifty-one IEPs. Eighty percent of the directors responded to the questionnaire, demonstrating their interest in learning more about other programs.

The information collected in this study makes it possible to compare and evaluate the relative characteristics of major IEPs. In addition, the survey results identify possible avenues for program modification and improvement.

METHOD

The survey sample consisted of all Intensive English Programs affiliated with a college or university with enrollments of 150 students or more per term. Fifty one IEPs met the criteria according to English Language and Orientation Programs in the United States (1982). The questionnaires were mailed in November, 1983. A list of the forty one responding institutions appears in Appendix B.

SURVEY RESULTS

Appendix A presents a detailed summary of the survey results. The first part of the questionnaire treated program size and structure. The results show that many of the enrollments listed in English Language and

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Orientation Programs in the US are inaccurate or outdated, since one fourth of the respondents have enrollments of under 150. Perhaps enrollments have declined since the printing of the book in 1982. In any case, most respondents have enrollments of 150 to 300 students per session. Ten percent of the IEPs have over 300 students per term.

The program structure of the IEPs typically conforms to either a fourteen to sixteen week or an eight to ten week session. Classes meet five days a week in almost every IEP. The average class size ranges from fourteen to seventeen students. Over half of the IEPs provide nineteen to twenty four hours of weekly classroom instruction, while twenty five percent of the respondents spend slightly less time in the classroom--sixteen to eighteen hours per week.

Although tuition varies widely among programs, the length of the session apparently is not a factor in determining the cost. (See Table 1). Almost half of the respondents charge between \$1,001 and \$1,400 per session, while one fifth of the programs charge in excess of \$1,400. Practically none of the programs includes the cost of books in the price of tuition.

Many Intensive English Programs offer multiple levels of instruction. Approximately one third offer more than six levels, while over half of the programs have four to six levels of proficiency. Only two respondents have three or fewer levels in their programs.

The next part of the questionnaire dealt with content areas and levels within the curriculum. The results show that basic skills such as reading, composition, listening comprehension, conversation, and grammar are included in the curriculum of most programs at all levels (See Table II).

Special skills courses such as study skills, Toefl preparation, accent reduction and survival English appear in the curriculum of approximately half of the IEPs. Table III describes the levels at which these courses are offered.

Courses in English for Specific Purposes are found in over half of the programs surveyed. Of these courses, Business English is offered most frequently, followed by English for Engineers and English for Science and Technology. Evening courses are offered by less than half of the IEPs. Although most of the evening courses have an academic orientation, about half emphasize survival English.

Credit is offered for ESL classes at almost half of the IEPs. The amount of course credit varies: for example ten institutions offer credit for all ESL courses, while six only give credit for advanced composition.

Directors were asked to identify the three major strengths of their programs. Most named "quality of faculty" and "curriculum" as principle strong points. Next most frequently cited were "reputation" and "quality of administration." Only about one third mentioned "teacher-student ratio" and "testing and placement" as strengths. Fewer claimed "teacher evaluation" as a strong point. The weakest areas seem to be "research and materials development" and the "language laboratory." Consistent with the directors' view of "research and materials development" as an area of relative weakness, most identified "research and materials development" as an area for future growth in their programs.

"Recruitment of students" was the next most frequently cited area for future development. Perhaps the downward trend in enrollments influenced this choice. Over a third of the directors mentioned "wages"

and "job security" as areas for improvement, while approximately one fourth targeted "office space," "teacher workshops," and "credit courses." The least cited areas for development were "teacher workload" and "afternoon and evening courses."

The governing academic unit of IEPs varies widely; however, one third of the programs belong to a Continuing Education division. Other IEPs are part of Modern Language, English, or Linguistics departments. Still others pertain to colleges of arts and sciences, humanities, developmental studies, etc.

Administrative positions in the IEPs almost always include a director. Approximately half of the programs also have assistant directors, lab directors and curriculum coordinators. Testing coordinators and cultural coordinators are part of the administrative team at over one fourth of the IEPs. In addition, several programs have composition coordinators, counselors, and program coordinators. One program even has a marketing coordinator.

Faculty status and salaries described in the survey results reflect the findings reported by Kreisler and Edmondson in "An ESL Employment Survey" (1982). Table IV compares the ratio of full time to part time faculty at responding IEPs. Slightly more than half of the IEP faculty are working with full-time contracts.

Many respondents wrote enthusiastically about the special features of their programs. Most of the comments referred to the curriculum; others praised faculty, administration and cultural programs. Among the special features which related to curriculum were: electives for high intermediate and advanced students, TOEFL, SAT and GRE preparation courses, individualized program instruction, and challenging, flexible

curriculum that meets the needs of the students, availability of tutors, and the opportunity for advanced students to enroll in regular university courses.

Several directors cited special cultural programs as worthy of mention. These included cultural exchange work, parties and trips, city tours to museums, historical parks, operas, concerts, river cruises, and a three-day residential program in cross-cultural skills.

In conclusion, the survey results provide a point of reference for cross-program comparison and evaluation. The information may stimulate ideas and provide an incentive for program development and change. Other, more detailed studies comparing professional responsibilities and rewards, curriculum and credit courses, recruitments procedures and admissions policies would be useful to expand our awareness of the status and changing role of IEPs throughout the United States.

References

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Kreidler, Carol J. and Phillip Edmondson, 1983. "The ESL Employment Survey: A Report." TESOL Newsletter 17(1): 6-9.

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Appendix A

Survey Results

51 QUESTIONNAIRES SENT 41 RECEIVED 80% RESPONSE RATE

<u>AVERAGE ENROLLMENT PER SEMESTER</u>	N	<u># of Total Response</u>
over 350	2	5
301-350	2	5
251-300	6	15
201-250	5	12
150-200	15	37
under 150	11	27

NUMBER OF WEEKS PER SESSION

over 16	1	2
14 to 16	19	46
11 to 13	2	5
8 to 10	14	34
less than 8	5	12

NUMBER OF CLASS HOURS PER WEEK

over 24	1	2
22 to 24	15	37
19 to 21	7	17

Appendix A, Page 2

NUMBER OF CLASS HOURS PER WEEK

Cont'd

N # of Total
Response

16 to 18	11	27
13 to 15	4	10
under 12	3	7

NUMBER OF DAYS PER WEEK OF CLASSES

5 days per week	39	95
4 days per week	1	2
0 to 3 days per week	1	2

AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS PER CLASS

over 21	1	2
18 to 21	5	12
14 to 17	17	41
10 to 13	17	41
6 to 9	1	2

TUITION PER SEMESTER

over \$1,400	9	22
\$1,201 to \$1,400	10	24
\$1,001 to \$1,200	7	17
\$ 801 to \$1,000	5	12
\$ 600 to \$ 800	5	12
under \$600	3	7

BOOKS ARE INCLUDED IN TUITION

No	37	90
Yes	3	7

Appendix A, Page 3

NUMBER OF LEVELS

	N	# of Total Response
More than six levels	13	32
6 levels	9	22
5 levels	6	15
4 levels	11	27
3 levels	1	2
less than three levels	1	2

COURSES IN ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Business	18
Engineering	11
Science and Technology	5
Health Services	2
Academic Writing	2
Courses on contract	2

EVENING PROGRAM IN ESL

No	25	61
Yes	16	39

TYPE OF EVENING PROGRAM

Academic	10	24
Survival Skills	8	20
English for Specific Purposes	4	10
TOEFL Preparation	1	2

CREDIT COURSES IN ESL

No	21	51
Yes	19	46

STRENGTHS OF PROGRAM

	N	# of Total Response
Quality of Faculty	32	78
Curriculum	30	73
Reputation	21	51
Quality of Administration	21	51
Teacher-Student Ratio	15	37
Testing and Placement	14	34
Teacher Evaluation	10	24
Research and Materials Development	7	17
Language Lab	7	17
Other	5	12

AREAS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Research and Materials Development	22	54
Recruitment of Students	20	49
Wages	16	39
Job Security	15	37
Office Space	12	29
Teacher Workshops	12	29
Credit Courses	11	27
Teacher Workload	9	22
Afternoon and Evening Courses	5	12
Other	6	15

Appendix A, Page 5

ACADEMIC UNIT OF PROGRAM

	N	# of Total Response
Continuing Education	15	37
Modern Language Department	5	12
English Department	3	7
Other	11	27
None	7	17

ADMINISTRATIVE POSJTIONS

Director	39	95
Assistant Director	25	61
Lab Coordinator	17	41
Curriculum Coordinator	17	41
Testing Coordinator	12	29
Cultural Coordinator	11	27
Other	15	37

MAJOR SOURCES OF FUNDING

Tuition	38	93
College or University Funds	7	17
Government Grants	2	5

NON-ESL ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED BY PROGRAM

Freshman Testing	10	24
Writing Lab	4	10
Composition Courses	4	10
Reading Skills	4	10
Other	10	24
None	15	37

TABLE I
TUITION AND LENGTH OF SESSION

TUITION	14-16wks	11-13wks	8-10wks	less than 8wks	Total
Over \$1,400	6	1		2	9
\$1,201-\$1,400	6		4	1	11
\$1,001-\$1,200	4		3		7
\$ 801-\$1,000	2	1	1	1	5
\$ 600-\$800			3	1	4
Under \$600	1		2		3
TOTAL	19	2	13	5	39

TABLE II
LEVELS OF BASIC SKILLS COURSES

BASIC SKILLS	ALL LEVELS	ADVANCED	HIGH INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED	INTERMEDIATE HIGH INTERMEDIATE & ADVANCED	ELEMENTARY & INTERMEDIATE	TOTAL
READING	37		1	2		40
COMPOSITION	33		1	5		39
LISTENING COMPRE- HENSION	36	1			2	39
CONVERSATION	34			2		36
GRAMMAR	36		1			37
TOTAL	176	1	3	9	2	191

TABLE III

LEVELS OF SPECIAL SKILLS COURSES

SPECIAL SKILLS	ALL LEVELS	ADVANCED	HIGH INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED	HIGH INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE HIGH INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED	INTERMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE AND ELEMENTARY	ELEMENTARY	TOTAL
SURVIVAL SKILLS	6			1			4	9	20
ENGLISH FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES	4	4	4	2	4			1	19
TOEFL PREPARATION	5	4	9	1	4				23
ACCENT REDUCTION	14	3			2	2			21
STUDY SKILLS	11	10		3	4				28
TOTAL	40	21	13	7	14	2	4	10	111

TABLE IV

PART-TIME FACULTY	0-3 FULL-TIME FACULTY	4-6 FULL-TIME FACULTY	7-9 FULL-TIME FACULTY	10-12 FULL-TIME FACULTY	13-15 FULL-TIME FACULTY	> 15 FULL-TIME FACULTY	TOTAL
0-3 PART- TIME		2	2	2	3	5	14
4-6 PART- TIME FACULTY	1	4				1	6
7-9 PART- TIME FACULTY		1	2				3
10-12 PART- TIME FACULTY		1	1	1			3
13-15 PART- TIME FACULTY	1	2	1	1			5
>15 PART- TIME FACULTY	2	1	1	1	1	2	8
TOTAL	4	11	7	5	4	8	39

APPENDIX B

WE WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK THE FOLLOWING SCHOOLS FOR THEIR
PARTICIPATION IN OUR SURVEY

Amarillo College

American Graduate
School of International
Management, Thunderbird
College

American University

University of Arizona

Arizona State University

University of California
at Berkeley

University of California
at Davis

University of California
at Riverside

College of the Desert

Columbia University

Eastern Michigan University

Florida Institute of
Technology

Florida International
University

George Washington University

George Institute of Technology

Georgia State University

Hawaii Pacific College

University of Houston

University of Houston at
Downtown College

Louisiana State University

Louisiana Technology University

University of Miami

University of Michigan

Michigan State University

New York University

CUNY at Hunter College

CUNY at Queen College

SUNY at Buffalo

Ohio University

University of Pennsylvania

Rutgers University

University of San Francisco

Southern Illinois University

University of Southern Mississippi

University of South Florida

University of Texas at Austin

University of Toledo

Tulane University

Wayne State University

Western Michigan University

Yale University